

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 418.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1871.

PRICE 1½d.

A VERY DARK SÉANCE.

As I stood (at about a quarter to 8 p.m.) at the door of No. 12 Kattafelt Row, Hamburg Square, where the séance was to be held, I felt that I was on the threshold of the invisible world. Messrs Hawk and Hernshaw, the celebrated mediums, were about to raise or bring down spirits to talk with me, and all for the small sum of half-a-crown. Flowers might shower on me, snow fall on me, live lobsters or gold earrings be placed in my hand; or I might be glided in a trance seventy feet backwards out of a window, like Mr Home at Lord Lindsay's, and all for the insignificant charge of two-and-six. And yet, with these cheap and glorious privileges awaiting me, such is the scepticism of unregenerated human nature, that now, at the last moment, I felt strongly inclined to dart suddenly round a corner, and walk off, like a boy who has given a runaway knock, in a totally different direction.

At last, however, I went boldly in, and found myself in a small, stuffy front parlour, over a bookseller's shop. It was a room divided with folding-doors, and provided, as Houdin would have arranged it, with two means of exit. There were two long tables in the front rooms, a piano in one corner, and a sofa. The windows were carefully closed, and the evening being very hot, the atmosphere was naturally oppressive. On the walls were some crazy-looking pictures, some of clouds that here and there disclosed a lurid-coloured face, others that looked like geometric puzzles. On the tables, which were much dented at either end, as if from blows, were several small speaking-trumpets, of a funnel shape, and constructed of stiff brown paper, in one or two instances covered with gold tinsel, which rendered them theatrically impressive.

About fourteen persons, including two ladies, a bluff man from Liverpool, several clerks, a journalist, an artist, and a dwarf (the rest might be anything), were wandering about the apartment in a hot, nervous, altogether uneasy manner, though trying to appear perfectly accustomed

to the spiritual world. Some looked at the pictures with vague wonder; while the sceptics took up the tubes, and talked through them in corners in hoarse and assumed voices. One or two of the party looked as if they would have liked to get away under any reasonable pretext.

All at once, Messrs Hawk and Hernshaw separated themselves from the general crowd, with whom they had hitherto craftily mingled, and cleared the decks for action. They were coarse-looking young men, the former of them rather more obtrusive than the other, and, moreover, with a strong accent, and a cast in his eye; and both were remarkable, I noticed, for large, red, muscular hands, strong enough to help the spirits in supporting any reasonable table. With a sanctimonious manner, as if about to officiate at some religious ceremonial of profound sanctity, the two mediums arranged us round the two long tables, and carefully dividing and isolating the sceptics, requested us to join hands. The Liverpool man objected to this, as unusual; but Mr Hawk pronounced it useful in 'improving the conditions;' and there we sat, unable to move right or left, whatever touched us. If spirit-hands touched my face with their cold fingers, I should feel like a man in the stocks when a fly settles on his nose. Spirits, as we all know, dislike the inquisitive daylight, and Mr Hawk at once put out the gas, in spite of the protest of a young Scotch sceptic, who sat near me, and who had worked himself up to a state of interrogation and chronic irritation. In the stifling darkness, there we were, fourteen souls all told, ready for any spiritual intelligence. The séance had begun.

Darkness represses the reason, and excites the imagination. There we sat at our incantations, ready for any spirits from Cain to Courvoisier—from Adam to Abe Lincoln. I began to feel rather ashamed of myself, and a little distrustful what would happen while my hands were held. Not that we were intently nursing our fears and fancies. O no! There was a good deal of half-hysterical laughing and nervous inquiry, and our voices answered and replied across the table boldly or

timidly, believably or sceptically. It was expected that Hawk and Hernshaw's two 'familiar,' John King, the sailor, and Kate, a great favourite at these séances, would soon appear; and when the back of somebody's chair broke, some of us perceptibly started. All at once, there was heard a rap that sounded remarkably like an upward kick at the table. That was a spirit. There was a lull of respectful wonder and curiosity, then Mr Hawk (who throughout played first-fiddle) seemed suddenly taken ill, for he began to groan and gurgle, and utter stifled complaints.

'Turn up the gas,' cried a sympathiser.

It was done; and there appeared Mr Hernshaw, his head covered with the red table-cloth (which had been thrown near him on the sofa, when the tables were cleared), and twisted like a young Laocoon in his choking folds. He disentangled himself with a disturbed, suffering air, as of one injured, but patient under spiritual persecution. No one expressed any surprise, but a gratified murmur of 'The spirits did it' spread among the faithful. Why Mr Hernshaw should have specially been selected for strangulation, no one was good enough to inform me; but it was so far gratifying, that it was a clear proof that the spirits were with us, and had begun their unaccountable antics.

A lady next me (dressed in that careless manner that many strong-minded women affect) now suggested that singing 'might improve the conditions;' on which, after some coyness and coquetting, Mr Hernshaw struck up *Power of Love Enchanting*, adapted to some feeble spiritualistic words. A faint voice here and there joined, but no especial results followed. It was time something should be done. The room was very dark and very hot, and it seemed to grow darker and hotter every moment. All at once, the raps under the table broke out furiously, as if the ghost of a twopenny postman was upon us. Some one not far from Mr Hawk was hit very hard on the head with a speaking-trumpet, and a tremendous bass voice shouted to the young Scotch sceptic, for he, it appeared, was the selected victim:

'You young Scotch puppy.'

'That's John King,' cried a believer; and there was a murmur of excitement among the faithful.

'Who is this John King?' said the honest man from Liverpool.

'He was a sailor, who lived about three hundred years ago,' said a voice in the dark.

'I believe he was a notorious pirate,' murmured the strong-minded lady in a tone of fanatical veneration of John King.

'Then he must have fought in the Armada,' suggested the illogical but imaginative Liverpoolian.

Mr Hawk leaped at this suggestion, as casting a halo over the pirate with the speaking-trumpet voice, and he replied: 'It is supposed he did.'

'I've no doubt he wears a pigtail,' again remarked the honourable member from Liverpool, now much 'exercised' on the historical bearings of the subject, if he was not a dry humorist making fun of the whole affair.

Mr Hawk, oblivious of the history of English costume, replied: 'O yes, he does;' which was encouraging.

With more raps or kicks from the tips of spiritual boots under the table, John King bellowed some incoherent threats, upon which the journalist exclaimed, in a dramatic manner:

'Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!' which so enraged the Armada pirate with the premature pigtail, that he shouted angrily close to the journalist's ear (he sat conveniently near Mr Hawk): 'You seem very fond of Shakspeare.'

Then subterranean voices—some one cheering the company. The spirits now began to set to their work in earnest. Presently, a white hat, from a heap on the piano close to the medium's right hand, danced about the table in the darkness, and finally, after exciting considerable anxiety in the minds of all the hat proprietors, alighted on the head of one of the company, who, after lights appeared, proved to be the rightful owner. Lights out again.

A mild, half-credulous man, with a long wavy nose, and luxuriant brown whiskers, now received much punishment from the unseen hand that wielded so fiercely the voice-tube. In meek tones he begged the spirits to spare him, but made no effort to ward off the shower of blows with which he was repeatedly visited upon his tender points, especially his wavy nose.

'Don't hit me so hard, John!' (Whiningly.)

A more violent thud from the card-board tube.

Then his whiskers were pulled.

'Don't pull so hard, John, please!'

A longer and a stronger pull from the spirit.

'That's right, John,' he said deprecatingly; 'pull away! You'll pull 'em all out presently!'

'Touch my hand, Katie,' said a lady, in a coaxing, wheedling tone of entreaty. 'Now, do, Katie, do; there's a dear!' (No response.) 'Come, Katie, won't you touch me just a little?'

But Kate was obdurate.

The spirits did not patronise those who were seated near the middle of the table, and farthest from the mediums, unless a wildly-flung antimacassar sofa-pillow or table-cloth happened occasionally to reach them, and keep them going.

'Why don't John King come to our part of the table?' says a neglected one, who seemed annoyed.

'He seems to stick to Mr Hawk's end,' observes another irreverently.

Much mutinous and general talking followed.

'If I were the spirits,' said one of the mediums, 'I'd throw a bucket of water over you there!'

Order restored, by a couple of stones thrown violently on the table. The oddest thing was that no one seemed surprised. One of these stones was afterwards found (lights up) to resemble a small thunder-bolt; the other was not unlike a fossil. Both looked very like mantel-piece ornaments, and I had seen Mr Hawk near the mantel-piece.

A disappointed man, towards the centre of the table, who had not been favoured by the spirits in any way, consoled himself by handling one of the voice-tubes which had strayed in his direction. The action was immediately discovered by the medium Hawk, who let the offender off with a caution. He would have punished him with a blow, but the culprit was quite out of the medium's reach.

'I felt the tip of a cold finger on my hand,' says some one to the right of Hawk.

'And I another,' says his neighbour.

An odour as of singeing cloth then impregnated the air, varied by a slight smell of chloride of lime, which, in its turn, changed into scented ribbon of Bruges incense.

A picture on one of the walls was heard to

tremble. All these supernatural occurrences seemed, somehow or another, like jugglers' wonders, and to be taken for granted by all of us. One would have supposed that stones fell from ceilings, that spiritual boots rapped tables, and that ghosts of pirates appeared every day in the week. Did this arise from redundant faith or profuse scepticism?

Hitherto, I had remained unnoticed; I had even, with pious fraud, checked the sceptics in my neighbourhood. Suddenly, however, a sofa-cushion flew at me from Mr Hawk's direction, and brushed past my face; but I said nothing, though every one else called out with alarm or credulous delight when they were struck. Whenever the gas was turned up, noises and missiles ceased; the moment the gas was down, we were hailed by John King, whispered to by sly Kate, or belaboured with speaking-trumpets. The young Scotch sceptic sneeringly suggesting that any ventriloquist could imitate John King, he again received a heavy blow on the head as John King thundered with fury: 'Do you call that ventriloquism?' a logical remark which so deeply affected the mutineer, that he soon after, when the gas was turned up, rose and left, with a look half of pity, as I thought, half of indignation at the credulous creatures who could sit and listen.

Gas down again. Heat and darkness, occasionally raps like runaway knocks, no voices following them. I am getting very cramped about the fingers, linking on in the circle so long with my neighbours. Moreover, I feel bored, uncomfortable, and ashamed of myself, but I stay out the farce. Occasionally, I fancy some spiritual feet touch mine; but as Mr Hernshaw's legs are south-by-east of mine, and in the direction from whence the spiritual feet came, I am on principle silent.

The strong-minded lady now manifests a special desire that Kate, the female spiritual companion of John King, would speak to us. Kate is begged and entreated to speak; but she does not seem to care much for our company, and only after much pressing, whispers some half-unintelligible words about a certain 'Jenny Jones of Hampstead.' The voice sounds very much like Mr Hawk talking small along the very edge of John King's speaking-trumpet; but that is, of course, a delusion. On being much questioned by the strong-minded lady, Mr Hawk, in a severe and grave voice, describes Kate as a short person with dark ringlets, and wearing a blue robe fastened by a girdle. The word robe being used instead of gown gave a romantic air to the whole description. The strong-minded lady breathes out audible groans of admiration. Towards John King, Mr Hawk preserves a tone of half-amused defiance, his rough ways and boisterous frankness being well-known traits of the Armada pirate. To Kate he talks with a certain air of gallantry and deference. The contrast is very striking. The Liverpool man, who seems aggrieved, says: 'At the last séance I was at, Kate kissed every one up and down the table. Why doesn't she now?' But Kate made no reply to these levities.

I cannot say that, all this time in the darkness, and with my hands, as it were, secured, I felt altogether comfortable. I had heard that hands sometimes touched one's beard, or pressed cold upon your face. I did not know who in the darkness might not be passing behind my chair; my

eyes and ears, strained to see and hear, might possibly be deceived. Some one near began to talk of flames that sometimes appeared. I had heard that these mediums began boldly to predict deaths. I did not want to be cognizant of wonders which I could not believe, yet might not be able to explain. The chairs creaked; the table began to seem restless; I did not know what was coming next, and already I longed for light and fresh air.

No more voices coming, Mr Hawk, to quell our impatience, lit the gas, and proposed that we should change places, and 'improve the conditions;' a favourite phrase, as I believe, of the spiritualists. We were then separated, and Mr Hawk sat in the centre of the table, surrounded by the more enthusiastic. But no result came. John King did not like people who put him out by quoting Shakespeare, and trying him with catch historical questions that required something more than a pirate's education to answer. He was not coming to be snubbed and cross-examined, and too much cushion-throwing is below the dignity of even a lost spirit. So he sulked, and stopped away with small-voiced, coquettish Kate.

Hotter and darker than ever. It is perhaps too hot for the spirits, some one suggests.

'The most favourable weather for spiritual influence,' said Mr Hawk approvingly, 'is frosty weather.'

'Something to do with electricity,' suggests an individual whose science is of a theoretical kind.

'After all,' said Mr Hernshaw, 'for real satisfactory experiment there is nothing like one of our private ten-shilling séances.'

'The spirits can't be compelled to appear,' observed Mr Hawk roughly but apologetically. 'I am merely their medium. The conditions seem bad. What you have heard and seen, ladies and gentlemen, this evening, is, we allow, not sufficient to convert any sceptic; but apparently no more can be expected.'

The two hours were over. Perhaps the spirits knew that we had had our half-crown's worth peep at the 'invisible world,' and we could not expect more. The gas turned up disclosed the tired, hot faces. The séance was over. There was a scramble for hats. Several enthusiasts shook hands with the mediums, and talked with unctious over somebody's flight through the air, and other recent phenomena.

With what pleasure I got out into the fresh night-air and the honest darkness of the streets!

I had heard and seen strange things, and yet, somehow or other, they hardly seemed supernatural. The medium, inspired as at Delphi, had certainly acted and spoken for the spirits. Could I believe that the ghostly shadow of John King bellowed through the speaking-trumpet, and not the bass voice of the vigorous Scotch medium with the cast in the eye? Could I doubt that Mr Hawk at least aided the invisible pirate, when I heard his chair creak before every utterance, as he threw himself back to give a good shout into the card-board tube? Had not all the cushions been thrown from Mr Hawk's direction? Had not the eminent naval hero betrayed just that amount of historical training that one might expect in an itinerant medium? No; I could not give implicit belief to the spiritual voices; nor do I even now think that the dead can be evoked, and prophecies delivered, and flowers and live lobsters brought from other

worlds, and all for the small charge of half-a-crown. Joking apart, I could not resist a conviction, that there seemed a certain discrepancy between the priests of this new form of witchcraft and the spiritual world with which they affected to hold intercourse. Over the animal world those mediums might have obtained some small power. If I had seen them in a circus, dressed in spangles, and driving four horses abreast, I should not have wondered. But what could poor John King and Kate have done when on earth, that they should now be humiliated by such abject bondage, and placed at the beck and call of men like Hawk and Hershaw?

CHIPS FROM INDIA.

ALTHOUGH the forests of India are still very large, owing to a climate highly favourable to vegetation, they do not present so imposing an aspect as those of America. Boundless regions of trees growing close to each other, entwined and interlaced by innumerable creepers, opposing the progress of the traveller, are not to be found in India. There are no solitudes which human feet have never violated, or giants of vegetation which add layer to layer of growth for centuries, and end by reaching dimensions an idea whereof can scarcely be formed: and which, as they have taken ages to increase, so decrease as slowly, losing now and then a branch, until completely deprived of foliage; their sap dried up, which fall of themselves, restoring to the soil all that they have drawn from it, and making a void in the forest, which young trees soon fill up. Nature in India has not this majesty; men have worn it out; the landscape has but too often the appearance of old age, painful to see: uncultivated land is only abandoned land; the forests, worked over many times, are cut out into clearings, and peopled by scattered villages, which seem to date from the earliest periods. It is the part of the globe where our species first planted itself, and from that day, thousands of generations have succeeded each other, demanding from the same soil the same miserable existence. The forests supplied what was wanted for their huts and cooking; they settled down with their flocks, cutting down the trees for the space necessary to grow rice and millet; then, when the ground was exhausted, they began the same work of desolation farther on. A large portion of the mountainous part of India has thus been traversed: frequently, in the thickest jungle, the traveller will come upon ruins of ancient villages, abandoned tombs; and even now many wandering tribes find their home deep in the woods. It is only in the most retired valleys and almost inaccessible mountains that forests are found containing trees important in their number and their height.

The variety of species is, however, very great; it has been reckoned as the largest in the world, without adding to it an infinite variety of shrubs. Starting from the southern point of Hindustan, and advancing northward to the summits of the Himalaya, the kinds which grow in every climate

may be met with, from those which belong especially to the tropical zone, to those which characterise the Alpine flora. Around the villages are the palms, the cocoa-nut tree, the sacred fig; then, in clumps scattered on the plains, are the tamarind, the teak, the mango. More to the north, the palms disappear; but the brilliancy and size of the flowers, with the evergreen tints of the forest, still give a tropical character to vegetation. The trees growing on the slopes of the Himalaya recall those of our own country, such as cedars, firs, and oaks. They are of the same family, though different in species; the green oak being the only one really resembling what is met with in the south of Europe. In the immense basin of the Sutlej, to the north of the Himalaya, magnificent groves of the deodara cedar are found, which, sometimes alone, or mixed with pines, oaks, and cypress, cover the sides of the principal valley and its innumerable branches. It is at the base of these mountains that real forests shew themselves; vegetation gradually disappears in the higher regions, until nothing but graminiferous plants are seen.

Though the variety of species is so great, the really useful kinds are very rare, for it is necessary to consider those only as such which can resist the attacks of insects and the variations of a climate alternately damp and burning. In the first rank must be placed the wood of the teak tree; it grows straight and to a great height, with large leaves and bunches of white blossoms. Originally a native of the mountainous parts of Malabar and Siam, it is now naturalised in most of the forests of Southern India; but whilst in the mountains it forms cylindrical columns of two or three yards in circumference, and twenty or thirty yards in height, in the plains its growth becomes very irregular. The trunk, it is true, remains straight, but it loses its cylindrical form, and becomes unequal, so that it is no longer so valuable for building purposes. It reaches its maturity when about eighty years old, but vegetates for a much longer time, and sometimes grows to forty yards in height. The mountain grown wood furnishes a most valuable material, very tenacious, easy to work, and not affected by variations of climate. It is probably the most durable of all timber, and for this reason has been as much sought after for the building of ships as for public edifices. It is said that teak vessels will last for fifty or sixty years, and Sommerat, who travelled in India a century or more ago, professed to have seen some more than a hundred years old. For a long period, England has furnished her arsenals with it, and it is largely exported from India. It covers a part of the chains of the Neilgherries and Anamalai, which run parallel to the sea along the Malabar Coast; it carpets the valleys of Sittang and the Irrawadi in the Burman empire, where it grows in forests the extent of which is estimated at two thousand four hundred square miles. It thrives as far north as latitude 21 degrees, and is found in the kingdom of Siam, in Ceylon, in Java, and other islands of the Indian Archipelago.

Owing to its wasteful destruction, the government of India has deemed it wise to take measures for its preservation, and only to cut down those trees that have reached their maturity. When a

forest is to be operated upon, the trees are examined, and divided into four classes—the first comprising those which measure six feet in circumference, the second four, the third three, and the fourth all those which are below these dimensions. A period of twenty-four years is fixed upon for the cutting down of the first, and so on for the others, so that in ninety-six years the whole forest will have been renewed. The trees are marked by girdling—that is, cutting a circular groove near the root, which kills the tree before it is felled, and prevents the necessity of leaving the tree to dry on the spot; the albumen contained in the sap runs off, leaving the wood unchangeable, since it is this substance which under atmospheric action produces decay. As these operations last for several years on the same spot, and are far away from the haunts of civilisation, it is necessary to build, in the forest, houses for the inspector and agents who direct the operations, huts for the workpeople, stables for the cattle, storehouses for provisions, and a home for a surgeon, the insalubrity of the climate requiring that one should always be at hand. The use of saw-mills has also been tried, but abandoned, on account of the impossibility of transporting them elsewhere when the work was finished at a certain place. The workmen belong to the wandering tribes; the greater part are very idle, and cease from their labour as soon as they have earned a few rupees. Once cut down and squared, the logs are carted by buffaloes or dragged by elephants to the nearest stream. The elephant is preferred, as it shews a real intelligence in the transport, dragging the heaviest pieces, to which it is harnessed like a horse, raising them with its teeth in difficult passes, without any other guidance than the sound of the voice or a hooked iron stick.

It is a common opinion that elephants do not multiply when in a domestic state, and that all those which are usefully employed are wild animals which have submitted to a process of taming. This is a mistake, as there is in Siam a province covered with woods and thinly inhabited, where they bring up elephants like any other cattle, and the greater number of those that drag the wood are brought from thence. The rest are imported from Ceylon, or the forests to the east of Calcutta, or the Himalaya, where they are hunted frequently, and such are generally found to be stronger than the domestic ones. Their price varies greatly, according to the weight they can draw. One which can easily transport sixty or eighty cubic feet of teak is worth not less than a hundred and twenty pounds.

When once the elephants have triumphed over the extreme difficulties of the ground to be traversed, where roads are unknown, and deposited their burden beside the river, the logs are carried down to the sea by raftsmen, who constitute a class of themselves, and display wonderful skill. The rafts, formed of pieces of wood bound together by fibrous bark, are very long; in the centre rises a little bamboo hut, covered with the leaves of the palm tree, where the raftsmen can shelter for the night, as they never proceed during it, but draw in to the shore, and fasten their craft to a tree until day dawns. It has been necessary in some parts, more especially in the Burman empire, now forming the western side of our Anglo-Indian possessions, to undertake considerable works as a preparation for these rafts, such as moving large rocks out of the rivers, and cutting canals. That

country is traversed by three large rivers, the Irrawadi, the Sittang, and the Salween, all offering great facilities for the floating down of wood; and to them is due the working of the forests, and the fact that the cities of Moulmein and Rangoon have become the two great dépôts for the sale of teak in India. When these rivers have been disembarassed of the rocks which encumber their higher bends, they will bring down to the sea the produce of the most distant forests, now inaccessible.

Dr Brandis, the Inspector-general of the forests of India, has made these valleys an especial study, and has discovered an immense extent of teak yet unexplored. They have been preserved from the woodcutter's axe by the rocks which prevented their being floated; but the Karens have destroyed them by a different process. They clear a certain portion, when possible on the side of a hill, leave the wood to dry on the spot until March or April, and then set fire to it. The soil is slightly scratched, to bury the ashes, and rice or millet is sown with the first rains: the harvest at the close of the year is most productive, and gives a larger crop than any other mode of agriculture. That of the second year is much less, and after the third, the place is deserted; and thus an immense number of fine trees are found lying on the ground in a state of decay.

After the teak, the most precious of Indian woods is the sandal. It is not used for building purposes, but made up in small bunches, and sold for the aromatic odour it gives out. Europeans do not like it; but the inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific are passionately fond of it, and use it to scent the cocoa-nut oil with which they cover their bodies. The Chinese also burn it in their temples as incense. In former days, it was very plentiful, but now it is becoming more rare; though there are still large forests in the Mysore, which are the objects of special care. There is another kind, to which the name of red sandal is given, which furnishes a much-esteemed dye. The wood presents this curious property: it is formed of fibres arranged in alternating layers, inverse the one to the other, so that, when it is planed, the two sides present angular surfaces, the one smooth, the other rough.

The *Shorea robusta* is to be found throughout the central parts of India, from the river Soane, which falls into the Ganges near Patna, to the Godavary, which fertilises a portion of the territory of Madras. It grows with remarkable rapidity, and reaches very large dimensions when it can have room to develop itself; the trunk has a wide diameter, and the branches spread themselves with a thick shade most welcome to the weary traveller. Its seeds, which are abundant, germinate as soon as they fall, and often while they are still suspended from the branches; for this reason, it is impossible to preserve them many days, or to convey them to any great distance. Thus, a grove of them spring up naturally, and with such profusion, that the young plants retard each other's growth, and form impenetrable masses, one tree sufficing for the perpetuation of large forests. Even more tenacious than the teak, it is used in buildings, for telegraphic poles, and sleepers for the railways. What is here called rosewood is a magnificent tree; its dark wood, beautifully marked, and susceptible of a fine polish, makes it very valuable for all articles of furniture. The jack tree may

also be mentioned ; the fruit, of an oval form, contains a white and farinaceous pulp, which gains for it the name of the bread-fruit tree. Nor must the beautiful cedar *deodara* be forgotten. Growing in large forests in the principal and side valleys of the Sutlej, above which masses of rock jut out adorned with the exquisite flowers of the *rhododendron*, it there reaches a height wholly unknown in this country, measuring eighteen feet in circumference round the bole, and rising to two or three hundred feet. Around an old temple near the village of Kunai, there are five of these trees which are reputed to be nine hundred years old ; one measures thirty-three feet round. As with all the other wood of India, they are exposed to the mutilations of the natives, who sometimes set them on fire to improve the soil, or spoil them for the most common purposes. Thus they cut out the terminal shoots of the young trees to make mats and cordage ; the lateral branches then shoot out and form a new summit, which has the effect of a bouquet of trees planted on a trunk of eight or ten feet in height. At other times, the tree is reduced to a simple pole, all the lower branches being cut off for litter for the cattle, leaving only a light tuft of verdure at the top. Although this wood is considered incorruptible, and, from its dimensions, large planks can be procured, yet it has, until lately, been altogether neglected. The utilisation of it has commenced under the superintendence of Dr Brandis, but many logs are broken when gliding down the sides of precipices before it can reach the edge of a stream ; in time, however, suitable arrangements will be made.

There are many other kinds which could be named which are valuable either for the fruits they bear, or the gums that exude from them, such as the *Ficus elastica*, whence flows the india-rubber after the trunk has been incised ; the *Acacia catechu*, producing the drug of that name ; and the *Pinus longifolia*, which secretes the terebinthine oil, or turpentine. In the midst of the sandy plains rises the great American aloe, which, growing isolated, gives a tone of melancholy to the landscape. It is not indigenous, as it originally belonged to the tropical parts of America. First imported to the Cape of Good Hope, it has spread to India, where it has developed in such a manner as to give a character to the landscape. When the flowering takes place, the bud shoots up with wonderful force and rapidity through the thorny leaves to the height of fifteen feet. Its leaves are used to cover houses, and, by macerating them, the long fibres are obtained of which cordage is made ; the thorns are also turned to account as nails and pins. One of the peculiar marks of tropical vegetation is the little variety it offers from one month to another, owing to atmospheric causes. Whilst in our temperate climate each season successively brings with it the leaf-bud, the flowering, and the ripening of fruits, here all these phases are confounded, and, in the same forest, trees denuded of leaves and others covered with flowers or fruits are met with at once. Preserving the same tint during the whole year, they have a uniform and saddened aspect, without the variety which gives such a charm elsewhere.

Beneath the larger trees that have been described grow the lower bushes, which invade all uncultivated ground, forming the impenetrable mass

called a jungle, the home of the wild elephant, tigers, and snakes. Even the jungle is not unproductive, some of the shrubs furnishing oils, rosin, or dye-woods ; the most valuable being the bamboo, which forms a beautiful object in its growth. It is employed in numberless ways : the longest stems, about sixty feet long, are used for the yards of ships ; the shorter ones, in buildings, or for furniture. The Hindus build their huts entirely of bamboo ; the walls, the roof, and all the articles they require for use, even bowls. For walking-sticks, for pipes and parasols, they are most useful. By steeping, the fibres can be made into ropes and Chinese paper. The pith forms an alimentary substance like sago ; and the flowers, mixed with honey, are the food of the poorer classes. Finally, a sweet liquid is drawn from the stem, which, when fermented, gives an agreeable beverage.

The formation of many new lines of railway has led to so large a consumption of timber, that the authorities have appointed conservators of forests, to keep them from wasteful destruction by the natives, and to plant new grounds. In the presidency of Madras alone, two million sleepers for the railways are required, the average duration of which is about eight years ; thus, two hundred and fifty-three thousand trees are yearly cut up ; and great vigilance is necessary to preserve the logs as long as possible from the attacks of insects by the injection of antiseptic liquids. The principle is to expel the sap, and replace it by a liquid, which, combining with the albumen, saves them from decay. The most approved are a dissolution of sulphate of copper, zinc, or creosote ; the last has the preference when the odour which it gives out is not a matter of importance, and it is a complete safeguard against the inroads of insects. The white ants and the carpenter fly are terrible scourges, leaving no exterior trace of their ravages, and yet hollowing out galleries twelve or fifteen inches long, and half an inch in diameter.

In addition to the requirements for railways, the supply of firewood is a source of anxiety to the government. So long as the jungles were in immediate proximity of inhabited places, there was no want ; but now that they are cleared for the growth of tea and coffee, the scarcity is felt. The celebrated iron-works use an immense quantity. Their reputation extends to the time of King Porus, who sent a specimen as a present to Alexander. For the manufacture of steel they mix the magnetised oxide of iron with charcoal, then put it into melting-pots with cassia-wood and the green leaves of the *asclepias*. These are piled in a furnace covered with charcoal, and set on fire ; at the end of two hours and a half, the crucibles contain the celebrated Damascus steel. As there is no coal but in the south of India, the locomotives depend entirely on charcoal, and all kinds are not equally suitable ; when too light, pieces escape from the chimney, and set the forests on fire. That used for household consumption is brought down by boats in bundles three or four feet long, and carried on the shoulders of two men, by a pole hung between them, to the markets. In Madras alone, a hundred thousand tons are yearly required. Besides the plantations which are preparing for future use, the engineers of each district are planting trees to shade the roads and the canals. Beautiful avenues of tamarinds and banyans, placed alternately, are already in full growth. The latter

spread rapidly, and give time for the tamarind to increase more slowly. They require much care, and must be watered regularly for the first few years, but afford a most grateful shadow to the weary traveller.

THE GUACHO'S VICTIM.

A DISH of curried parrots, a haunch of venison, smelling strongly of musk, an iguana's tail roasted, and an omelet of ostrich eggs, made up my Christmas dinner on the 25th December 1870. I was dining with five other men in a 'wattle and dab' hut, far out on the South American Pampas. We were all settlers, stock-owners, sheep-farmers, 'estancieros' (I don't know which word will be most intelligible to English ears)—that is to say, we were all men living solitary lives among our native stockmen and savage cattle-dogs, in little mud huts, or straw 'ranchos,' far apart from one another, on the great plains that stretch from the South Atlantic to the feet of the Cordilleras. At one time or other we had all 'looked on better days,' and 'been where bells have knolled to church,' and 'sat at good men's feasts;' but adverse circumstances, healthy elder brothers, dead certainties at various race-meetings, 'beasts with bills,' and other ills that the flesh of the younger son is peculiarly heir to, had long since compelled us to rise early, and late take our rest, and spend long, hard, monotonous days on horseback, hunting up our strayed cattle, and galloping round our out sheep-stations. Most of us only spoke our own language once a month, when the English mail came in; and we galloped our best horses into the nearest town to gloat over letters from home, and have a glorious talk over the English news with other men come in on a like errand. But on Christmas-day, we six friends and neighbours (one uses the word 'neighbour' in an extended sense in the River Plate) had agreed to meet, and have a thorough holiday, and an unlimited talk over old times in the old country, not omitting the best dinner that could be got up for the occasion, and a generous supply of whisky to wash it down. Our meeting was to take place in the largest house available among the party: it consisted of three rooms—sleeping-room, living-room, and kitchen—with a broad verandah running round all, in the shade of which I found all the party assembled, some swinging in hide hammocks, some in easy and elegant attitudes, on chairs tilted against the wall, feet far above heads; all pipe in mouth, and many glass in hand, when I rode up early in the morning, after my forty-mile gallop from my own place. I had saddled-up at the first sign of daylight, and got over the first half of my journey soon after sunrise; then I halted, unsaddled the horse I had been riding, and left him to trot back home, saddled the one I had been leading, and pushed on again at the untiring gallop of the Pampa horse, so that I arrived at my destination before the sun had become so powerful as to make travelling unpleasant. Even so, the thermometer was standing at 98 degrees in the shade, when I dismounted; and before the day was over, it marked 110 degrees in the coolest place in the house.

How pleased we all were to meet! And when I had unsaddled and tethered out, and had got rid of my coat and revolver, and imbibed the necessary

cocktail, what a talk we had over all our doings since our last meeting! Then we all rode down to the river, and bathed ourselves and our horses, mounting bare-backed, and swimming them along under the shade of the great willows that overhung the water. Then we had a pipe in a cool corner of the wood, and discussed the qualities of the various horses that stood dripping round us, tied to the willow branches; and we made up three or four matches, to be ridden in the cool of the evening; and so we lounged through the day, much to our own satisfaction. Just before sunset, we took our horses again, and rode two or three matches—short mile races—after the fashion of the country. Then it became quite dark, and we dined. We had agreed that, after dinner, every subject connected with the country we were living in should be tabooed; so we told stories of old Christmas times we had enjoyed in England, and of hunting, and of balls, and of girls (not one of us had seen a lady for five years), and, in fact, of all the pleasures of civilised life, to which we all so longed to return. How charming the old English life seemed, when seen down the vista of half-a-dozen years in the wilderness! and how home-sick we all were, in spite of our love for our wild, galloping, open-air life!

We were decidedly a 'mixed lot'—that is to say, as regards our occupations before we went into the wilderness to feed sheep: army, navy, law, civil-engineering, Green's service, and man about town, had each a representative. Some of us had known one another's 'people at home'; some had only made acquaintance since their settlement in the wilds; but we were all *friends*—a word that perhaps means more on the prairies than it does in Europe; so we sat smoking, and talking, and laughing till far into the night; and then a man with a glorious voice stood up and sang *Auld Lang Syne*. We were not a sentimental party, looking at the bare wooden table, with a whisky-bottle and a tobacco-cutter for its only ornaments, or at the men who sat round it, rough and sun-burned, with their patched flannel shirts and ponderous revolvers; and it was odd to see how the old song affected us all. After it, we all went out into the verandah to collect our saddles and rugs, to make our beds in camp fashion. It was a bright moonlight night; and as we stood looking out for a moment over the great plains, we were aware of a dark mass moving up towards the house; and presently we saw, what was more common than pleasant to us, the moon sparkling on the heads of lances; and soon after, a guerrilla party, eight men and an officer, pulled up before the house, and dismounted.

These night-visits from armed parties of Guachos had been by no means uncommon events with all of us for many months before this. In April 1870, the well-known governor-general, Urquiza, had been assassinated in his own palace, in the midst of his family; and from the time of his death, the country had been in the wildest state of anarchy and confusion: guerrilla bands scoured the country in all directions; the very names of law and order were forgotten things; murders and robberies were of daily and hourly occurrence. In the midst of this, we Englishmen, taking no part in politics, nor much interest in anything excepting our work, managed to live without suffering much annoyance beyond that of having our best horses seized to remount the troopers, and occasionally

half-a-dozen of our fat bullocks slaughtered for the dinner of a passing detachment. Nevertheless, we had to exercise a good deal of tact and management in our dealings with the Guachos; naturally blood-thirsty and perfectly lawless as they were, we in our isolated stations were completely at their mercy if they chose to be mischievous. So we went out and greeted our visitors, and invited their leader into the house; and his men, after unsaddling their horses, came dropping in by ones and twos, and took their seats, after the free-and-easy manner peculiar to republican soldiers. The officer informed us that he had ridden all night, and had knocked up all his horses, and therefore intended to halt with us until daylight, and then take fresh horses from us to continue his march. Of course we had no help for it but to accede with as good a grace as we could; and then, having furnished our guests with plenty of tobacco and spirits, we proceeded to entertain them to the best of our ability; they seemed to wish to make themselves pleasant; and we soon got into animated conversation; then a guitar being produced, one of the Guachos sung a Spanish love-song; in return for which, we treated them to a roaring English chorus, which was immensely applauded. In this way, the few remaining hours of the night went so quickly that we were all surprised when we saw daylight appear through the open door. Then the officer asked us to let his men breakfast as soon as possible, as he had a long day's work before him; so some of us bustled about to prepare food, while the others drove up the 'tropilla' of horses belonging to the establishment to the stock-yard, and caught the nine remounts required by our friends.

In spite of our wakeful night, I think we all did justice to the breakfast; and when it was over, the chief, standing up, thanked us, in courteous Spanish style, for the entertainment he had received, and added, that to mark his sense of the courtesy and good-fellowship with which we had treated him, he would not deprive us altogether of our horses, as he confessed he had intended to do, but would merely ask of us the *loan* of them, as far as the nearest 'estancia,' where he would change again, leaving ours to be given up whenever we chose to send for them. He deeply regretted, he said, the necessity he was under of troubling us at all. Of course we all thanked him profusely, delighted both with his politeness and at having saved so many of our best horses; so his men being by this time mounted, we said good-bye, with many expressions of friendship on both sides.

While we were still standing in the verandah, watching them as they rode slowly away, one of them left the ranks, and came back to the house at a gallop. When he reached us, he said it had occurred to them that in the hurry and bustle of changing horses at the next estancia it was quite possible that some of ours might get lost; so, would it not be better if one of us were to accompany the party, in order to collect the horses when they were unsaddled, and drive them back at once before him? This struck us all as a capital arrangement; and Graham (the singer of *Auld Lang Syne* the night before) at once volunteered to go, his horse being the only one already bridled. Not wishing to stop to saddle, he threw a deer-skin on the horse's back, and vaulted up to

accompany the trooper. We saw the two join up with the main body, and noticed how conspicuous Graham's white flannel shirt and trousers rendered him among the dark ponchos of his companions.

Then we all went into the house, and sat round the table, laughing over our visitors, and praising the consideration of their chief; and I was debating with myself which would be the coolest and quietest corner of the house in which to take a sleep after the excitements of the night, when a man, who was lounging in the doorway, lazily watching the retreating party through a race-glass, suddenly froze all our blood by exclaiming: 'Good God, I think they have killed Graham!' Then came the rush to the door, the horror-struck faces, the questions and answers, the furious search for revolvers and bridles, mislaid in the confusion of the night. All this in a moment.

I snatched the race-glass, and saw the party far away, but still clearly visible on the level plain: they were riding in a line, and I counted them, backwards and forwards, and still could only count nine figures; the tenth, all in white, which had been so conspicuous a few minutes before, was no longer to be seen, and one trooper appeared to be leading a riderless horse. By this time most of our number were mounted. I forced the bit some way or other into my horse's mouth, cut his tethering-rope, threw myself on to him, and we were soon all racing down the long slope from the house. As we went, I ranged up alongside the man who had first given the alarm. He said he had been watching them carelessly through his glass, and he thought they must have been a couple of miles away, when he noticed a movement among them; the line seemed to get confused into a solid mass; there was a halt, two or three seemed to dismount. He thought he saw something like a puff of white smoke rise into the air. Then the line formed itself again, and moved on as before; but he missed Graham's white figure. Then he counted them, as I had done afterwards, and could only count nine. Then the truth flashed on him, and he spoke, and filled us all with horror. After he had told his story, no one spoke again, but we rode furiously. I don't think any of us had any doubt as to what had happened. We had all had experience of the objectless barbarity of which the Guacho is capable when seized by the *gusto de matar*, 'desire for blood,' peculiar to his accursed race.

At last some one said: 'Here is the place;' and we pulled up, and began our search. No one said anything; but we instinctively separated a little from one another, and began to ride slowly up and down at regular intervals, beating the ground in the most effectual way; but it is difficult to see a fallen object in the long prairie-grass, and for many minutes we found nothing. Then I saw an old pointer, which had followed us from the house, but had been thrown out by the pace we had ridden, come trotting up, delighted at having overtaken her friends, and throw herself down for a luxurious roll on the grass after her hot run; but she had hardly rolled over once before she started up and set off up wind, her head in the air. Some one said: 'Look at old Bessie.' And we all followed her; and we found him lying on his face, shot through the back, quite dead.

His murderer afterwards said that he had had no dislike to the 'gringo' (foreigner), but that

seeing him riding in front of him, in his white clothes, he had suddenly placed his blunderbuss to his back, from *puro gusto de matar* (a simple desire to kill).

CHRISTMAS PIES.

WHEN Dr Parr, in the arrogance of scholarship, rebuked a lady for talking of minced-pie, and bade his fair friend to be careful to say Christmas pie for the future, he was too hasty in his assumption of superior knowledge. The mince-pie in one sense may be a Christmas pie, inasmuch as it is eaten at Christmas-tide, but its right to be specially so entitled is a questionable one. Authorities, it is true, may be cited in favour of the doctor's view. The traveller Misson set down that every English family provided itself with a famous pie called Christmas pie, a most learned mixture of neats' tongues, chicken eggs, raisins, lemon and orange peel, and various kinds of spicery. A rhyming assailant of the Presbyterians writes of

Three Christmas or minced pies, all very fair,
Methought they had this motto, 'Though they flirt
us,

And preach us down, *sub pondere crescit virtus*;

and Addison tells us he was induced to buy one of Baxter's books from perusing a scrap of it that he rescued from the bottom of a Christmas pie. The pastry-cook who put it to such base use must have been a bit of a wag, seeing that mince-pies were things of horror to all good Puritans, who looked upon them as papistical devices of the enemy of mankind. We fancy it is to their energetic denunciations of it, that the mince-pie owed its reputation as the sovereign dainty of the great festival, for, of course, the more the one party railed against it, the more the other delighted in enjoying it. 'As for our plum-pottage and mince-pies,' cries Pastor Fido, 'stand off, and do not let them trouble you. We dare eat, making no question, for conscience' sake, because our stomachs are strengthened by that piece of invitation, *Eat the fat, and drink the sweet*. Our meat, which is more choice than at other times, puts us in mind of Christ's sinless humanity, and our strong drink of his spiritual consolation.'

The association of the mince-pie with religious party-feeling is noticed by a writer of the middle of last century, who complains that the dainty has fallen into disuse, which had always been considered the test of schismatics, and zealously swallowed by orthodox folks, to the confusion of all fanatical recusants. The complaint is re-echoed in the *Connoisseur* in its paper headed,

Come, let us, like our jovial sires of old,
With gambols and mince-pies our Christmas hold.

How our great-grandmothers used to make mince-pies is shewn in Sir Roger Twysden's receipt: 'Take a fillet of veal or a leg of mutton, and when it is parboiled, shred it very small; then put to it three pounds of beef-suet, shred likewise very small; then put to it three pounds of Corinthes, well washed and picked, and one pound of sugar, beaten; of nutmegs and cinnamon of each an ounce. So put them in coffins or pies, and bake them. You must lay some of the Corinthes atop of the meat when they be made, and must not therefore mingle them all with the rest.'

The wish being father to the thought, some learned churchmen taught that the varied ingredients of which the mince-pie was composed were symbolical of the offerings of the wise men of old; and that the pies were put into a coffin-shaped crust in remembrance of the cratch or manger in which the Holy Child was laid. Such fanciful ideas were the offspring of antiquarian imagination, not antiquarian research. 'Coffin' was but a technical term with ancient cooks for the crusts of pies of every sort. Petruccio compares the cap bought for his termagant bride's wearing to 'a custard-coffin, a bauble, a silken pie;' and one of the personages in Jonson's *Staple of News* says:

If you spend
The red-deer pies i' your house, or sell them forth,
sir,
Cast so that I may have their coffins all
Returned and here piled up. I would be thought
To keep some kind of house.

If the mince-pie was a symbolical dish, it is singular that it should have been thought hardly right for a clergyman to partake of it; yet that was certainly the case once, for Bickerstaffe grumbles at mince-pie being often forbidden to the Druid of the family, as he calls the chaplain. 'Strange,' says he, 'that a sirloin of beef, whether boiled or roasted, is exposed to his utmost depredations, but if minced into small pieces, and tossed up with plums and sugar, it changes its properties, and forsooth is meat for his master.'

Ben Jonson, in his *Masque of Christmas*, personified Minced-pie as a fine cook's wife, attended by her man bearing a pie, dish, and spoons. We do not believe its connection with Christmas can be traced farther back than James's time, but the thing itself was known long previous. Shakspeare, in his solitary allusion to the popular dainty, invests it with extraordinary antiquity; by a bold anachronism, making it coeval with the siege of Troy. His Pandarus praising Troilus to his wayward niece, asks: 'Is not birth, beauty, good shape, discourse, manhood, learning, gentleness, virtue, youth, liberality, and such-like, the spice and salt that seasons a man?' To which Cressida replies: 'Ay, a minced man; and then to be baked with no date in the pie—for then the man's date's out.' From which we learn that dates were used in making mince-pies in the poet's day. Minced meats were in high favour with cooks of olden time, perhaps, because, as Bacon says, 'they saved the grinding of the teeth;' and something very much resembling the mince-pie, so far as its ingredients were concerned, was boiled in a skin, sausage-fashion. We have seen a sixteenth-century receipt for making mutton-pies, in which the said pies are, to all intents and purposes, identical with mince-pies.

In one of Field's plays there is an allusion to the shredding of the meat, that reads very much like a sneer at the Scotch Solomon. Lord Feesimple is a coward, and thus accounts for what he cannot conceal: 'I being in the kitchen, in my lord my father's house, the cook was making minced-pies. So, sir, I standing by the dresser; there, lay a heap of plums; here, was he mincing. What did me! I, sir, being a notable little witty coxcomb, but popped my hand just under his chopping-knife to snatch some raisins, and so was cut over the hand; and never since could I endure the sight of any edge-tool!'

In a manuscript, *Breviate on the Order and Government of a Nobleman's House*, dated 1605, mince-pies appear in the dietaries of January, March, September, and November; the caterers of the City Corporation are, therefore, quite justified in placing mince-pies upon the Lord Mayor's table at the November banquet, and, in so doing, stand more upon the ancient lines than their castigator, Mr Sandys, who, dilating upon what appears an enormity in his eyes, says: 'This is an irregularity that some archaeological Lord Mayor will no doubt by-and-by correct; at anyrate, they should be eaten under protest, or without prejudice, as lawyers say. They ought to be confined to the season of Christmas, and the practice of using up the remnant of the mince-meat, even up to Easter, should be put a stop to by some of our ecclesiastical reformers.' The appearance of the Twelfth-cake would then be the signal for the disappearance of the mince-pie, in accordance with farewell words an old carolist puts into the mouth of Christmas:

Mark well my heavy doleful tale,
For Twelfth-day now is come,
And now I must no longer stay,
And say no word but mum.
For I, perforce, must take my leave
Of all my dainty cheer—
Plum-porridge, roast-beef, and minced-pies,
My strong ale and my beer.

Some forty years ago, the guests at a City dinner were invited to attack a dish of most imposing appearance, in the shape of 'A most choice pasto of games to be eaten at the Feast of Christmas,' prepared according to the following formula, dating from the days of King Richard II.: 'Take pheasant, hare, chicken, of each one; with two partridges, two pigeons, and two conies, and smite them in pieces, and pick clean away therefrom all the bones that ye may, and therewith do them into a paste of good pasto, made craftily in the likeness of a bird's body, without the livers and hearts; two kidneys of sheep, and seasoning of eggs made into balls. Cast thereto powder of pepper, salt, spice, vinegar, and mushrooms pickled; and then take the bones, and let them seethe in a pot, to make good broth for it; and put it into the paste, and close it up fast, and bake it well, and so serve it forth, with the head of one of the birds stuck at the one end of the paste, and a great tail at the other, and divers of his long feathers set in cunningly all about him.' Such was our ancestors' notion of a Christmas dish; a dish easily converted into a pie, deserving the epithet applied to it in the old wassail verse:

Lordlings, list, for we tell you true,
Christmas loves the jolly crew
That cloudy care defy;
His liberal board is deftly spread
With manchet loaves and wastel bread,
His guests with fish and fowl are fed,
Nor lack the stately pie.

A newspaper of 1770 describes a fair specimen of the genuine Christmas pie: 'On Monday last was brought from Howick to Berwick, to be shipped for London, for Sir Henry Grey, Baronet, a pie, the contents whereof are as follows: Two bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild-ducks, two wood-cocks, six snipes, and four partridges; two neats' tongues, two curlews, seven black-birds, and six pigeons. It is supposed this very great curiosity

was made by Mrs Dorothy Paterson, housekeeper at Howick. It is nine feet in circumference at bottom, weighs about twelve stones, will take two men to present it to table; it is neatly fitted with a case and four small wheels, to facilitate its use to every guest that inclines to partake of its contents at table.' At a Christmas-eve supper, given by Sir Francis Darwin, at Lyndope, Matlock, one of the dishes was a prodigious pie, containing, among other things, two geese, two turkeys, two hares, two pheasants, two rabbits, a roasting-pig, and a quantity of small birds. Pies of this sort were usually spiced, so that they would keep for weeks, and were placed on a side-table, for all comers to cut at and come again. A Sheffield publican, landlord of an inn known by the curious sign of *The Sportsman's Group*, used to pride himself upon setting a Christmas pie of huge dimensions before his customers, for their gratuitous enjoyment. One of this liberal host's annuals weighed fourteen stones, and was composed of four-and-a-half stones of flour, nine pounds of lard, five pounds of suet, and four pounds of salt, and held in its interior two legs of veal, weighing together twenty-six pounds, thirty rabbits, and forty-two pounds-weight of pork. Its outside measure was three feet two inches in length, one foot nine inches in breadth, and seven inches in depth, the crust being beautifully ornamented in the Grecian style. This item of festival fare is still, we understand, extant in the north of England, and it must be owned it is a worthier companion to the lordly baron and knightly squire than that 'cookery kickshaw' the mince-pie, which has somehow or another usurped its title of Christmas pie.

MR ARKLEY'S WILL.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER IV.

THE funeral is over. It is a ceremonial which brings strongly to view the reality of grief where it exists, and its mockery where true grief is not. The mourners are gathered together, and Mr Tompkins reads the will in a strong clear voice. He takes off his spectacles, wipes them leisurely, and looks about him.

There are not many persons present, but most of them manifest more or less of surprise. The late Mr Arkley had so notoriously preferred George Arkley to Frederick Teesdale, that one or two friends of the former immediately requested to examine the will. It was handed to them with much politeness, and they scrutinised it narrowly. George himself was undoubtedly astonished and pained. The document was not even according to the draft which had been completed before his eyes; and the extreme kindness of his uncle's manner at the close of his life had naturally engendered the idea that that draft had been tampered with, and the signature to the will subsequently obtained by artifice. Yet presently he saw the will returned to Mr Tompkins, and heard the latter say: 'It is attested, you see, gentlemen, by our clerk, and also by the deceased's own servant. You will admit all is in order, I think?'

Somebody bowed on behalf of the malcontents, and the party adjourned to luncheon, where a conversation ensued on the cultivation of asparagus, which lasted pretty well until the dispersion of the sorrowing band.

When George Arkley rose to leave, he was

surprised by a message from Frederick Teesdale, who had quitted the table some minutes previously, that he, Frederick, was unwell, and was going to his lodgings, but he would call to see his cousin next day.

It was, unquestionably, in a gloomy and perplexed state of mind that George departed. Here was a mystery, but solution there was none. The dead could never return, and the reason of this most unexpected distribution of his uncle's property could never be known. There, however, was the fact: Teesdale was now rich, and he, George, in pecuniary means, greatly his inferior.

How would this affect Emmeline Waveley, between whom and George there existed an implied engagement of marriage? George had his misgivings, and they were soon realised. After an interval of an hour or so, he paid a visit to the young lady. He thought to be the first to communicate the news of the will; but he was wrong. Miss Emmeline candidly told him that, through a channel not mentioned, she was already informed thereof; and there was no doubt as to the tone and manner in which Miss Waveley spoke. There was a wide, wide difference between the styles of yesterday and to-day; scarcely any phrases too endearing a few hours ago; scarcely any too chilling now. But this was not all; George was about to force an explanation, when Mr Frederick Teesdale was announced.

It was manifest that Teesdale came to see and to conquer. He who had been so openly discarded, was now as openly received back into favour, *vice* Arkley dismissed. Without a word, George hastened from the house.

With his brain in a whirl, he hurried along the streets. He had become calm over the disappointment of the will, but he could not brook the loss of Emmeline Waveley. What an absurdity! This upright, clear-headed, good-hearted man, of thirty years, utterly infatuated with an avowed, unprincipled coquette! Can anybody explain inconsistencies of this kind?

That will—it was certainly a very curious affair—was it not worth while to look a little closer into it? Yes.

Strait to Tompkins and Sharpe's went George. As the executor, he obtained not only a copy of the will, but also of the letter which accompanied the draft. And then he had a good look at the draft itself.

Humph! This was not the draft he had seen on the well-remembered night. No erasures here; no 'George Arkley' struck through, and 'County Hospital' inserted, and then the hospital in its turn obliterated, and so forth. All was fair and flowing. Arkley detected nothing amiss. The simple, almost boyish hand of his uncle had no peculiarities, and none were visible here.

Away to see the witnesses to the will. But first to Dr Bromley. The doctor was in a rage. Where was the legacy which Teesdale had alleged to be set out in his favour? Nowhere! So the doctor told George enough to satisfy him that, in all likelihood, Mr Arkley had signed the will without duly knowing its contents. This was very important. And now he was ready for the witnesses. And here some hopes, which had begun to flutter within him, received a heavy blow; for the legacy to James, the man-servant, was not a fiction, but a reality, and James stood up for the will vehemently; not only so, but the female servant

—the witness—did the same; and both put the doctor in such a light before Arkley, that the latter felt Bromley's testimony to be worse than useless.

Back to Tompkins and Sharpe's. Mr Tarsey was not at all indignant at being questioned, but he did not encourage his examiner. Everything had been properly and precisely done. The will had been read over with the utmost care, and Mr Arkley had thoroughly understood its contents. George felt the case against the will which he had been framing in his mind, was rapidly dying out. There was still one thing to be done, however, and in furtherance of it, he wrote briefly to his cousin, stating that next day he should examine their late uncle's private papers. There was no need to write thus, for George was sole executor; but with his particular object, he felt he should rather like Teesdale to be present than otherwise.

Next day, then, at the hour appointed, George was busy in the old room. Inexpressibly painful work it is to look over the papers and letters of loved ones gone. You find many a letter received from yourself, some trifling affair which you never thought of after it went to the post; but there it is, put away carefully in a corner, locked up as a cherished thing. There are the little presents you gave on birthdays long ago, reminiscences of many happy hours, bright and cheerful times for ever gone! Again the sun lights up the glorious country scenery through which you travelled on some well-remembered day, and again you seem to sit by the winter fireside, and to rejoice in a presence to be known no more! It is a custom to speak of a dead friend as 'poor.' I do not like the expression. 'Heaven help the living,' I say. No pang of separation troubles those who gently sleep; but where are the words which shall describe the emotion produced in the living by the upturning of the old faded letters, the little gifts so well preserved, the likeness sent when you were far away!

George waded through a mass of papers and letters, and then he came upon something which he opened with no small anxiety. It was labelled, 'Dft of my Will,' and dated the same day as the letter to Tompkins and Sharpe, a copy of which he had in his pocket. This draft proved the same which George had seen on the night when he and his uncle had conversed about Miss Emmeline Waveley. There was the alteration just as his uncle had made it, but there was a further alteration, as the reader knows, in George's favour. It may well be understood how this document excited Arkley. His mind rapidly took in all the circumstances, and soon arrived at very near the truth. This was no doubt the real draft, and it differed from that forwarded to Tompkins and Sharpe in a part which might very easily have been added by the hand of an expert imitator; and his cousin was with his uncle on the very night when the draft-will was forwarded to the solicitors, the night of the old gentleman's first seizure. Doubtless, there had been an opportunity, and advantage had been taken of it, to alter the fair copy sent for engrossment. But, unfortunately, what did all this amount to, when there was no getting over the fact of the due execution of the will? There were two apparently disinterested witnesses in favour of the will, and where was the chance of upsetting it?

As George stood pondering, a mocking voice came over his shoulder: 'One would think George Arkley was reading a love-letter.'

Frederick Teesdale was the speaker. He spoke in this janty fashion, but he was very pale, for he had seen the paper George was reading, and he, too, had rapidly viewed the situation, and scanned the chances of a battle if George should shew fight.

'What do you think of that, Frederick?' George inquired quietly, putting the draft-will into the hands of the latter.

Frederick ran his eye over it. 'You cannot expect me to say I like it better than the will actually made,' he replied.

'Frederick, my uncle, in the true sense, never made that will, and you know it.'

Teesdale stepped back. 'Is this a deliberate insult, Arkley?'

Before replying, George rapidly put back into the drawers the papers he had been examining, locked them up, and then turning to Teesdale, said: 'Keep your wealth while you can, and your other prize which you have robbed me of, still I say, while you can. Better to be that crossing-sweeper who stands at the door, in the pouring rain, hatless and shoeless, than Frederick Teesdale. And before Teesdale could recover from the bitter speech, Arkley was gone.

Teesdale sat down, and looked, and really was, stunned. Arkley saw it then, understood the whole case, perceived that he (Teesdale) was a forger, and that, instead of being the possessor of some twenty thousand pounds, he ought to stand in a felon's dock. Perhaps he might have to stand there even yet! What was the meaning of his uncle having had the will to look at, and yet having returned it unaltered, and without comment? Suppose there should be some link wanting!—suppose light should unexpectedly come on the transaction in some wholly unforeseen way, in what an awful position he would be placed! He almost fainted at the bare thought.

But he rallied. The thing was done, and could not be undone, and (though there was a mystery) the will remained, and it was idle to sit there frightening himself with shadows. He had secured twenty thousand pounds, and Emmeline Waveley. Had he? As regards Miss Emmeline, she was wide awake. She had misgivings about this will, and for a little while she thought the sea-saw system would be the best. Lovers were plentiful just now. There was Brailsby in a state of desperation, and Brailsby was eligible. Unfortunately, Brailsby was not also practical. Flirtation in plenty she could get from him, but at present nothing else. And there were sundry others of Brailsby's stamp, men who became distracted (in appearance) at balls and club windows, and so forth, but whose conversation respecting her (behind her back) was slightly disrespectful. Then there were many who 'dangled,' and a few who were sincere. From these she selected such as were either useful or ornamental, sending the others to the right-about. These last said tremendous things, which reaching the ears of the 'sincere' squad, stopped their advances considerably. Still, Miss Emmeline had always a very respectable following (as regards quantity); and by alternating encouragements and chills in skilful proportions, she managed to keep the little army, spite of small rebellions now and then, in a decent state of loyalty.

A week passed. No hitch, no return of the

horrors, when, one morning, Mr Manton was announced. If the servant had said: 'Jack Ketch is ready, sir, and the prison authorities are waiting to conduct you to the scaffold,' Teesdale could scarcely have gasped more painfully.

Mr Manton entered—a quiet, good-natured, benevolent old gentleman, but yet evidently firm of purpose. He glanced at Teesdale's pale face and restless frame, and seemed to give a little nod to himself, as much as to say: 'Of course.'

Frederick pointed to a chair.

Mr Manton took it leisurely, placed some papers on the table, and then said quietly: 'Mr Teesdale, you know what I've come about.'

This was straight to the point with a vengeance! Frederick tried to look surprised and fierce, but the effort was very shaky.

'The dev'—

'Not exactly.'

'Are you a detective officer, sir, and do you take me for a murderer?'

'Not exactly.'

'Not exactly! What, a burglar, perhaps?'

'No; nor that. Suppose I say I look on you as an "improver of wills."'

It was coming. Teesdale saw it.

'In Heaven's name, out with it, Mr Manton, whatever you've got to say.'

Mr Manton's manner changed. He had accomplished his object. As executioner, he would give as little pain as possible.

'Mr Teesdale,' he said, 'I am a solicitor living very many miles away. After being years abroad, I returned to England a short time since, and came by invitation, one evening, to see my friend George Arkley, your late uncle, and dined with him. In the course of the evening, he told me he had made his will, and its contents; but he added he thought he had not been quite kind to you. He very highly disapproved of certain proceedings of yours (which were known to him, though you were not aware of it); nevertheless, a will which left you nothing, he thought, was wrong. I thought so too; and early that evening the will was fetched from Tompkins and Sharpe's. The excitement occasioned to my friend by reading it was fearful. Now it happened the draft was sent inside the will; perhaps that is a practice at Tompkins and Sharpe's; and when my poor friend's horror and agitation had a little subsided (I quite thought I should have lost him then and there), we both examined carefully the draft, my friend telling me the circumstances (which he well remembered) under which he made it; how it was on the table the night of his seizure, and when you were his sole— But I spare you. Well, Mr Teesdale, our conclusion, as regards that part of the story, was clear and immediate; and although it remained, and still remains, rather a mystery how the actual will came subsequently to be signed, there are one or two ways of accounting for it, which we perceived, but did not care to investigate. The course we quickly determined on was this: not to cancel the will, for that would involve wonderment and disturbance, which I was most anxious to save my dear invalid friend, but to return the document quietly to its former place, saying not a syllable to anybody, and to draw a fresh will, revoking the former, and putting matters on much the same footing as was at first intended. It was soon done. In ten minutes, a fresh will was prepared and

executed in my presence, and in the presence of another witness I specially procured. Here it is; and it differs from the former deed in these respects, that to George Arkley is left the twenty thousand pounds, while you are residuary legatee.

'I left residuary legatee!'

'Yes. Your poor uncle still felt he had wronged you in the will he had intended to make, and he took into consideration the mortified feeling you no doubt experienced on finding yourself wholly passed over. And now, Mr Teesdale, I shall fulfil your uncle's request, and keep silence in this matter. I shall go to Tompkins and Sharpe's, who, I take it, will offer no opposition to the later will. You will come in for some four thousand pounds; and, with all my heart and soul, I trust a better career is yet before you. Good-bye.'

It is a fact that Frederick Teesdale felt happier when an hour or two had passed than he had done for a long, long time. He breathed freely again. No more horrors, no more heart-shakings. But how about Emmeline Waveley? There was not much doubt how this altered condition of things would influence her. No, there certainly was not. Frederick met her a day or two afterwards, and she cut him in the most absolute fashion. But Teesdale had his revenge. He saw her meet George Arkley the next minute, and bestow upon him one of her most fascinating smiles. But George might have been stone blind, for any sign of recognition he gave. Miss Emmeline turned pale and red by turns. Never mind, there was Brailsby. What! Brailsby looking straight another way! Were people out of their senses this fine morning! But the devoted Manvers was at hand, the handsome captain she carried by storm at the last ball. He could not throw himself at her feet exactly just now, for she was riding in Rotten Row, but how delighted he would be to see her! Would he? He stared in her face, and yet he didn't see her!

This was too much! Never mind, revenge would come. Here was old Stivers. 'How do you do, Mr Stivers?' Gracious! Was Stivers deaf? He heard not, he spoke not, he looked not, and his cob jogged on. This could not be Hyde Park! That could not be the sun, nor those things trees! Miss Emmeline went home, and to bed; and Dr Bromley being called in, shook his head gravely, and said there was 'a complication.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE Royal Society have done so much for science, that their choice of a president becomes interesting not only to themselves, but to that large section of the community who take pleasure in science under her familiar and popular aspects. Since our last 'Month' was published, the venerable Society above mentioned have listened to the farewell address of Sir Edward Sabine, and have elected in his stead Mr G. B. Airy, the Astronomer-royal. Sir Edward's scientific activity has been remarkable: his connection with the Society dates from half a century ago; and though his advanced years (beyond eighty) compel him to resign the presidential chair, he has not ceased to work. The great task of his life has been the working out of the facts and phenomena of terrestrial magnetism,

and on this he is still engaged, hoping to complete it before finally laying down the pen. What he has already accomplished may be read in the *Philosophical Transactions*, and in that important work will the remainder be published—a memorial alike of the author and of the Society.

Mr Airy, the new president, by his researches in astronomy and physical science, has made the Greenwich Observatory famous all over the world; hence we may hope that the scientific reputation of the Royal Society will continue to grow under his presidency. It must have been Greenwich that Emerson had in mind when, in describing our *English Traits*, he said that with the worst climate in the world, we have the best astronomical observations.

The aquarium at the Crystal Palace is one of the best attractions which have been there provided of late years. You descend a stair to a handsome corridor, one side of which is bordered by seawater tanks with plate-glass fronts that rival shop fronts in dimensions. Here you can lounge and watch the movements and habits of creatures that live at the bottom of the sea, and acquaint yourself with much that could not be seen in any other way. The domestic life of flounders, whiting, cod, and many other kinds of fish may be studied with amusement as well as instruction; and the behaviour of lobsters, crayfish, crabs, prawns, and cuttlefish will perhaps astonish most beholders. And in witnessing all this, so ample is the space and the supply of water, that the idea of the creatures being captives scarcely enters your mind, and you come away with a conviction that a great deal of very interesting natural history may be learned in the new aquarium.

Cambridge is recognising the fact that the oriental languages are becoming more and more important as subjects of study, and, in university phrase, is about to establish two independent oriental triposes, namely, Semitic and Aryan. Under the first would be comprehended Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic; and in 'a great Christian university' an accurate knowledge of these four should be regarded as indispensable. Under the second head come Sanscrit and Persian; and the Board of Oriental Studies express a hope that 'the university will grant a fair field for the growth and development of studies so intimately connected with Biblical and Ecclesiastical literature, with the religion of our Indian fellow-subjects, with the science of language, and the history of the human mind.' Cambridge has already an oriental scholar to be proud of—Mr Palmer, the author of the recently published two volumes, *Desert of the Exodus*.

Once more the old familiar topics, waste of fuel and the smoke grievance, have come to the surface, and are discussed with more of denunciation than discernment. If coal in prodigious quantities is wasted at the pit's mouth, that surely must be the fault of the owners, who, perhaps, are not in want of money; and if enterprising people are willing to manufacture this waste coal into serviceable fuel, and sell it at a cheap rate, there can hardly be any objection to their doing so. There are thousands of people ready to treat themselves to a good fire at small cost, who will be customers. It is therefore to be hoped that the business will be not merely talked about, but actually done. And, as regards the smoke nuisance: better than all the

schemes for clearing the air of smoke would be, general adoption of the practice of not sending smoke into the air. Smoke is fuel, and ought to be burned; but how shamefully it is wasted every one knows, or ought to know. Count Rumford shewed fifty years ago how a fire-place should be built to give out the greatest amount of heat with the smallest consumption of fuel, and with scarcely any waste of smoke. But the count's simple, yet effectual, plans are neglected, while fashionable fire-places, which burn much coal, make much smoke, and give out but little heat, are encouraged. In this case also the remedy is obvious—doing and not talking. Proper fire-places can be had, if people only determine to have them.

Gas appears to be a never-failing subject of experiment, and now we hear of a new process of converting coal which yields a brighter and purer gas than any hitherto produced. This comparison applies probably to the gas as manufactured in the south of England, which is notoriously inferior to that made in the north. London is badly off in this particular, as any one knows who has seen the clear and brilliant gas of Edinburgh. Even in provincial towns it would be easy to point out streets which are brighter at night than the streets of London. The process above referred to brings out a gas which is said to contain an unusually small amount of sulphur; consequently, it would be much less deleterious than the gas in ordinary use. Two other improvements are talked about, consisting in each case of an admixture of other kinds of gas with ordinary gas. We content ourselves with mentioning the fact, and shall be ready to notice it again if it ever really comes to light. Perhaps that ingenious nation in the East may give us some help in this matter, for gas is about to be introduced into Japan, the first trial to be made at Yokohama, and they may devise means hitherto undreamed of in these latitudes, of increasing alike its purity and its illuminating power. They may send us quick news thereof, for the oriental telegraph now extends to the Japanese port of Nagasaki.

It is pretty well known that a few eminent civil-engineers are of opinion that in our principal lines of railway there is a great waste of material, power, and expense; and that with light railways and completely filled trains there would be more profit than at present. It should be understood that a light railway is not necessarily a very narrow gauge: it is light in construction and in rolling-stock, as may now be seen in an example in Buckinghamshire. There a line six miles in length connects the Duke of Buckingham's estates at Wotton with the Aylesbury and Buckingham Railway. The gauge is four feet eight and a half inches: there are no heavy engineering works; the highest embankment is not more than twelve feet, and the deepest cutting ten feet. All the turnpike roads and lanes are crossed on a level, which saves the cost of bridges; and with few exceptions, the only fences are the existing hedge-rows. We are informed that the estimate for this line was, exclusive of cost of land, not more than £1400 a mile. It is obvious that a single line of railway, such as here described, worked by horses, would in many districts prove a most valuable feeder to a main line, and would be at the same time sufficient for the wants of the inhabitants.

Colonel Scott, whose name is well known in

connection with the Exhibition Buildings at South Kensington, has invented a new kind of mortar, or a new way of making mortar, which promises to be very useful to builders everywhere. First, sulphate of lime in the form of gypsum, or plaster of Paris, or green vitriol, is mixed with water in the pan of a mortar-mill. The lime is then put in and ground for three or four minutes, followed by the sand, burned clay, or other ingredients, and the whole is ground for ten minutes more. At the end of this time a kind of cement-mortar is produced, which sets well and quickly, and can be used as concrete, or plaster, and in bricklayers' work, and at a cost below that of mortar made in the ordinary way. The merit of this process consists in the fact, that sulphuric acid prevents the slaking of the lime, which, in consequence, takes up twice as much sand as when slaked, and becomes by so much the stronger. The proportions should be five parts of sand to one part of lime. Commonly, the acid in plaster of Paris or in gypsum suffices: if not, it is always easy to add a small quantity of sulphuric acid. The name by which this new building material is described is Selenetic Mortar.

The *Transactions* of the Institution of Naval Architects contain a paper 'On a Vessel in Motion, and what becomes of the Water she disturbs,' in which the author, Mr Ransford, shews that before forcing the water up into a wave on each side of the bows, there is a downward pressure of considerable amount. This downward pressure is sensibly felt whenever the vessel enters shallow water; her speed is lessened, and the men on board say 'she drags.' This may be noticed on the Thames between Hammersmith and Kew. The explanation is, that the stratum of water set in motion by the bow strikes the bottom of the river, and instead of curving gradually upwards, as in deep water, it reacts against the bow, and causes the vessel's head to rise and her stern to drop. 'Judging from these observations,' says Mr Ransford, 'it appears that what causes one ship to sail faster than another—other things being equal—is the shape of bow which forces the water she displaces laterally, rather than downwards.' The pressure from below offers a heavy resistance, which is not felt at the sides. 'If,' he continues, 'the Admiralty would build a gunboat, light draught of water, with a broad flat floor extending from stem to stern-post, but having, nevertheless, fine ends, and the bow formed to impel the water sideways, and even slightly upwards as it approached its greatest breadth, they would have a fast vessel of her class capable of carrying the heaviest naval gun in her turret, and keeping at sea in worse weather than when the unfortunate *Captain* went down.'

There are few persons now-a-days who have not heard something of the use of phosphates in agriculture. Many writers have treated of it in this country; and the president of the Natural History Society of Montreal in his last annual address mentioned the subject as one of high importance. Phosphates are essential constituents of all our cultivated plants, especially of those which are most valuable as food. In order that they may grow, these plants must obtain phosphates from the soil, and if the quantity be deficient, so will the crop. Agricultural chemists tell us that even in the ashes of wheat the amount of phosphoric acid is fifty per cent.; hence it may be understood

how severely the cultivation of wheat exhausts the soil. Canada is comparatively virgin soil, and yet thousands of acres have been impoverished by the growth of wheat; and the only remedy in that or any other country is a liberal application of phosphatic manure. The manufacture of these manures is at present a large and profitable part of British industry; but we learn from the address above referred to, that if Canada would set to work properly to develop her mineral resources, she would produce not only enough for herself, but for half the world beside. It might perhaps be found that phosphate-digging in Canada would pay as well as gold-digging in California.

It is reported from New Orleans that a way has been discovered to use ammonia as a motive-power, the principle being that of the ice-making machine; motion is obtained by rapid evaporation and energetic absorption. An ammonia engine is said to have made eight hundred trips, and drawn a car at a much cheaper rate than it could be drawn by horses.—In Philadelphia, an electro-magnetic hammer has been invented for use in dentistry—and especially in plugging the teeth. A discontinuous current passes through the instrument, the hammer is thereby vibrated with great rapidity, and the plugging tool is driven forward at each blow exactly at the will of the operator. By this the precision of an operation may be secured, and the time thereof shortened.—From the same quarter we learn that porous iron is the best material for the making of water-filters, as it possesses remarkable powers of purification.—And that an electro-magnet has been constructed for the Stevens Institute of Technology near New York, which is truly American in its dimensions and capabilities. It weighs sixteen hundred pounds, and will lift from thirty to fifty tons.

SHAVERS.

ON the very hottest day of July, my brother Toby and I emerged from the railway station at Lausanne. We had come straight from Paris, but had been delayed *en route* by troop-trains. We were as black as negroes, and looked and felt as though we had been profusely peppered with the coarsest black pepper. All of us know this pleasing effect of the Belgian coal used on the French railways. Fortunately, the Swiss friends with whom we intended to stay had given us up for lost, and were not at the station; so we had an opportunity to cleanse and beautify ourselves. Need I say that we speeded through the shady paths of the Beau Rivage Gardens to those charming baths which, like a miniature Chillon, rise from the waters of Lake Lemane, and there spent half an hour in watery paradise. And then we were driven to the shop of a well-known barber of Lausanne.

I had never before been shaved by other hands than my own, and it was with a certain sinking at the heart that I sat down before a glass. An elegant boy, with hair miraculously arranged, enveloped me in a white wrapper, and soaped me sedulously with ice-cold and refreshing lather. Meanwhile, the master of the shop stood by and held a fierce argument with a German gentleman upon the war, which had just then begun, and on the chance of Swiss neutrality being violated. The Swiss had sent forty thousand men to the frontier, and gloried in their patriotism. 'And if,'

said the warlike barber, 'the Prussians or Bavarians shall cross our frontier'—and as he said this, he gently seized my nose between his left fore-finger and his thumb, and waved his razor like a sabre in his right hand—'we Switzers will sweep them from the earth;' and with one flourish of his razor he swept away the nascent bristles of my right moustache. Never shall I forget the horror of that moment. My head rested against the chair-back, so there was no retreating from my position. The slightest forward movement, and my nose would have been gone for ever. I dared not speak or scream for mercy, lest my lips should have been cut off. I sat in speechless stillness, not daring even to tremble. But in two minutes the ordeal was passed, and I was shaved and scatheless.

'By George!' said my brother Toby, 'that's what one calls a close shave. I think I will keep my bristles till to-morrow, and not risk my nose.' So we departed from the shop. But Toby and I had many discussions afterwards how it was possible for any barber to learn to shave, and as to what kind of mortal could be mad enough to trust his nose and chin beneath the razor of an embryo barber making his first essay.

Some six weeks afterwards, I was at the queen of West of England watering-places, sitting under the hands and scissors of Mr Clipclose, the emperorking of hair-cutters. Now, Mr Clipclose clipped my ambrosial locks while I was yet a boy; and so, when I go to his shop, and ask specially for him, he deigns to leave his high estate (that is, the drawing-room over the shop), and to do that which he, with proud humility, terms 'wait' upon me; and while he clips my hair, he entertains me with sweet converse.

'Mr Clipclose,' I ventured to ask on this occasion, 'did you not find it difficult, in the first days of your apprenticeship, to discover people who would let you cut their hair? How did you manage?'

'Well, sir,' said Mr Clipclose, 'many persons *do* find it difficult; but I was an ingenious boy. I had to open my master's shop at eight o'clock, but no one came till nine; so, for that hour, I used to stand at the shop-door, and keep a sharp lookout for boys with great crops of hair, and when I saw one, I used to look sweet-like, and beckon him over, and say: "I say, my buck, let me cut your hair. I'll cut it quite fashionable, and give you a penny in." But after a bit, they'd take a half-penny; and before I'd been at the business six months, they were glad to have their hair cut for nothing.'

'And is that the way,' I asked, 'in which your apprentices learn?'

'No, sir,' said Mr Clipclose, with some little indignation; 'that which I was speaking of was a third-rate establishment. We go on a better system here. All the wheel-chairmen are in my employ. Each of them comes here once a month, and one of my young gentlemen cuts him, and then he has a pint of beer.'

'And did you ever learn to shave?'

'Yes, sir,' said Mr Clipclose; 'a guinea extra was paid, and it was put special in my articles.'

'And upon whom did you learn?' I asked with deepest interest, for to this all my questions had been tending.

'Ah, sir,' said Mr Clipclose, heaving, to my astonishment, a heavy sigh, 'that's a melancholy

subject. I don't like to think of it. My master contracted to cut and shave the County Lunatic Asylum, and we used to practise upon the lunatics. Poor things! they wouldn't sit still, and I almost suppose they couldn't; and we hacked them about quite awful. Awful, awful!' he murmured at intervals for the next three minutes, with sad shakings of his well-curled head. 'I never have had the heart to shave since I have been a master,' he presently resumed, 'entirely owing to that. I keep a regular shaver, and he is a real artist, sir, I do assure you. You come to-morrow morning, sir, and he shall shave you.'

On the morrow, I took my courage in both hands, and went. The shaver *was* an artist. And though, from circumstances over which I had no control (for example, the lather and shaving-brush), I could not open my mouth to question him much, yet I kept my eyes open, and I learned some hints towards my future shaving operations. Let me set them down for the benefit of neophytes in this branch of self-culture. As you strap your razor, strap the two sides alternately, and keep the back of your razor always on the strap, as you turn it from side to side. You thus avoid cutting your strap and turning the edge of your razor. As you shave, keep your razor almost parallel with the skin, and *not* at a great angle with it. Give your razor also a slight lateral motion. In fact, to borrow the simile of the artist, 'the more you can make your shaving like mowing grass with a scythe the better.' Do not make faces as you shave, with the object of making a better surface for your razor to act upon. The skin when strained is easily cut open. Adopt these hints, and you will bless the unknown giver, and will feel deep pity for those unhappy lunatics, to whom the last was certainly unknown.

ETTIE.

UNDER the boughs of the mighty cedar,
Flitting across the sun-lit lawn,
Restless and gay as a bird of summer,
Buoyant and fresh as a fair spring dawn,
Ever rippling the onward current
Of daily life with a deepening joy,
Laughs little Ettie, the household plaything—
Ettie, our bonnie, our bright-faced boy!

Clutching up his favourite kitten
In a reckless fashion, queer to see;
Romp among the black-haired puppies,
Hark! how he shouts with exultant glee.

But if he deems that his dumb companions
Are hurt by a harsh or an angry word,
The small lips quiver and dark eyes glisten,
By the depths of a tender pity stirred.

Passionate tempests of short-lived anger
(May they be as brief in the coming years!)
Flame in the midst of his fun and frolic,
Suddenly quenched in repentant tears.
A moment more, and the quick mood changes;
With folded hands, and a serious look
In his deep clear eyes, the tiny student
Ponders over his picture-book.

Or he comes with a glance of arch entreaty,
And quaint, sweet fragments of baby-speech;
And we think we have lured him down to stillness
By the gift of an apple or crimson peach.
But no! Away with a ceaseless patter
The small feet go on the nursery floor;
And a second after, the white frock glimmers
Like a butterfly out through the open door.

So wane the hours, till the evening slumber
Composes to rest each round white limb,
And the curly head on the welcome pillow
Peacefully sinks in the twilight dim.
Oh, through the paths of the unseen future,
In storm or in sunshine, grief or joy,
Brave and pure, and loving-hearted,
God keep our Ettie, our darling boy!

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